

THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CONFERENCE was organized at Minneapolis in November, 1930. It consists of the following independent church bodies: The American Lutheran Church, the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, the Augustana Synod, the Lutheran Free Church, and the United Danish Lutheran Church. The Conference has a total confirmed membership of 1,059,714, 6,301 congregations, and 4,237 pastors.

OFFICERS

President—Dr. E. E. Ryden
2310 12th St., Moline, Illinois

Secretary—Rev. L. M. Stavig
Northfield, Minnesota

Treasurer—Otto Leonardson
415 Harvard St. S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota

Contents

Page

RECENT SWEDISH THEOLOGIANs AND THEIR THE-
OLOGY by C. G. Carlfelt.....481

THE OLD MOTHER CHURCH AND HER CHILDREN by
John P. Milton.....511

PREPARING COLLEGE STUDENTS FOR CHRISTIAN
WORK IN THE CONGREGATION by Karl Ermisch.....520

THE CONGREGATION'S RESPONSIBILITY IN THE WEL-
FARE PROGRAM OF THE CHURCH by S. C. Eastvold..528

EDITORIAL 537

THE CHURCH TODAY 542

The JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY is a monthly periodical devoted to the advancement of theological inquiry and thought, the promotion of the work of the ministry, and the general interests of the American Lutheran Conference. It stands committed to positive and vital Lutheranism, faithfully adhering to the Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church. It is published by the American Lutheran Conference at 200 Front Street, Blair, Nebraska. Subscription price \$2.50 per year in advance.

Communications pertaining to subscriptions and change of address should be addressed to the publishing houses affiliated with the American Lutheran Conference.

Entered as second-class matter January 29, 1938, at the post office at Blair, Nebraska, under Act of March 3, 1879.

Journal of Theology

of the
American Lutheran Conference

Volume VII

July, 1942

Number 7

Recent Swedish Theologians and Their Theology

By Professor C. G. Carlfelt, D.D.

Augustana College and Theological Seminary, Rock Island, Illinois

INTRODUCTION

"Modern Sweden", this is a subject on which many lectures have been delivered and on which several books have been written. Due to fortunate external circumstances Sweden today finds itself in a rather unique position among the nations of the world. It was spared the ravages of World War I, and during the two decades that followed that war the country enjoyed comparative prosperity, with the result that it forged ahead, especially in the field of social legislation. Constant change and continuous progress have been the most characteristic notes in Swedish life during the last three decades, and in this instance change and decay have not been companions. This particular era has rather been one of growth and development. We find, therefore, that Sweden of today is quite a different country from what it was even a generation ago.

While it may not be possible to state with exactness just what it is that has given the impetus to change and development also in ecclesiastical life and in theology, it is, nevertheless, a fact that within these fields notable achievements are to be recorded. Some years ago, in speaking of Swedish theology, I made the assertion that we could not then speak of any distinctive Swedish school of theology. Before the coming of the present century Swedish theologians showed an unmistakable influence by their German colleagues. I added, however, that there were certain signs on the horizon indicating that a new day was approaching, so that in the near future it might be possible to speak of a distinctive Swedish theology. That day, I believe, has now arrived. By way of an historic orientation we deem it advisable briefly to note the background and to describe the milieu out of which this Swedish theology has come.

PART ONE: THE BACKGROUND

I. *Ecclesiastical Sweden.*

LUTHERANISM is old in Sweden. Already in 1519 the youthful *Olavus Petri*, a student of Luther's at Wittenberg, began to make the ideas of the Reformation known in his native country and did much to establish the new movement in Sweden. In this he had the aid of the king, *Gustavus Vasa*, who ascended the throne in June, 1523. While his motives to a certain degree may have been influenced by secular considerations, such as the wealth of the Church as over against the Crown, the king, nevertheless, also had a true spiritual interest in the Reformation; consequently the reformation movement in Sweden was more than just the severing of the ties between the Church of Sweden and Rome. *Laurentius Petri*, a younger brother of *Olavus Petri*, holds an important place in Swedish church history. He became the first archbishop of the realm, and it was during his tenure of office that the first Church Regulations were adopted. These Regulations were the result of the ripe experiences of the venerable archbishop, and they embarked the Church on a middle course as far as its government was concerned, that is, they endeavored to strike a balance of power between the king and the ecclesiastics.

Attempts were made by the sons of *Gustavus Vasa* to reintroduce Catholicism in a somewhat modified form, but all such efforts came to naught, and at the Diet of Uppsala in 1593 the Lutheran faith was once and for all declared to be that of the people of Sweden. The results of this Diet have been aptly characterized by Bishop John Wordsworth of England in the following words:

"It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of this council as a turning point in the history of Sweden. The lay historians of the country have perhaps hardly realized its full significance and its unique character. It stands out as evidence of what a national church may do for its people when it is allowed to have a reasonable independence. There are few if any parallels to be found in the religious history of mankind" (*THE NATIONAL CHURCH OF SWEDEN*, p. 261).

At the Diet just referred to, the chairman, when the final vote had been taken, exclaimed: "Sweden has now become ONE man, and we all have ONE Lord and ONE God". Ecclesiastically this is true, or nearly so at least; for 98% of the population are members of the Lutheran church, and this in spite of the fact that the law

of the land stipulates that a person may leave the Lutheran Church to join some other religious body.

The Lutheran Church is the established church of Sweden, but the Church does not like to call itself by the name "State Church", preferring rather the term "Folk Church". It is, however, intimately connected with the state, especially in the matter of support. As to church government there is a combination of state and ecclesiastical authority. Elected representatives together with the bishops and members of the theological faculties meet every other year to deliberate and to decide in matters belonging to the government of the Church. In principal matters that have to deal with the statutes of the Church there must be agreement between King and *Riksdag* on the one hand and the *Kyrkomöte* on the other. In other matters the *Kyrkomöte* can act without consulting the *Riksdag*.

II. *The Church and Education.*

The Church of Sweden has exercised a tremendous influence in the field of education. Religious instruction has been, and still is, compulsory in all the schools of the realm, though of late the system and method of this instruction has undergone some important changes. The need of training men for the priesthood was one of the factors that led to the establishment of the first university in Sweden in 1477. After the Reformation this need was felt still more keenly, and it was then that the two state universities of that country actually became real institutions of learning. These universities are located at Uppsala and Lund, and founded in 1477 and 1666 respectively. Those and other independent schools have produced a number of world-famous scholars, especially in the field of natural science; but that is a matter that does not fall within the scope of these lectures. Both of the state universities have theological faculties, and the ministers of the Swedish Church are graduates of one or the other of these schools.

The method followed in the election of a theological professor is rather unique. When a vacancy occurs, those who may desire to become theological professors apply for the position. A committee of three competent judges is then selected, and these separately render their opinions regarding the merits and relative fitness of

the applicants. From the list of applicants the faculty selects three persons whose names they present, in the order of their preference, to the chancellor of the university. The chancellor, in turn, submits this list together with his own considerations to the King, who appoints one of the candidates to fill the vacancy. Thus, while the clergy are trained at the universities, the Church only indirectly has a voice in the selection of the professors. Since the universities are not controlled by the Church, there is not only the utmost of academic freedom, but it may also happen that the person appointed to a theological professorship perhaps is not the actual candidate of the Church. (It may be interesting to note that the present professor of Church History at the University of Uppsala is a member of the Baptist group. In all fairness we should add, however, that this man is a recognized scholar and that he does not use his position as a means whereby he might further his own religious views.)

The two state universities of Sweden have labored side by side for about two hundred and fifty years, both serving their church, their country, and the universal cause of science to the best of their ability. While the statutes according to which they are governed are the same, there have been some very distinct differences noticeable between these two schools as to their inner character, especially so with reference to their views and ideas in theological matters. They are characterized in the following words by Bishop Wordsworth:

"It would not, perhaps, be wrong to say that there are more opportunities for general culture at Uppsala, and for the study of philosophy and history, while life is more intense at Lund, and that dogmatic theology and classical literature were more at home there than at the Northern University" (Wordsworth, *The National Church of Sweden*, p. 286).

A Swedish writer, J. E. Berggren, presents a striking and epigrammatical evaluation of the kind of theology that was represented by each of the Swedish universities toward the close of the last century, saying: "The Lund theology emphasizes more strongly the objective element in the life of Christendom; that of Uppsala lays more stress on the subjective. The Lund theology is penetrated by the conviction that false subjectivism is the greatest danger of Protestantism. Uppsala recognizes that true subjectivism is the condi-

tion necessary for Protestant life" (Eulogy on Archbishop Sundberg at the *Prästmöte* in Uppsala, August 5, 1902).

It seems strange that Sweden has been so slow in producing any outstanding theologians, and that it may be rather difficult to explain this situation, but certainly this is not without its causes. We have already referred to the fact that up to the beginning of the present century Sweden was theologically dependent on Germany. Both geographical proximity and cultural affinity in general made intercourse with Germany the natural thing. Of late ecclesiastical leaders in Sweden have established contacts with the Anglican Church, but this has had to do more with church polity and liturgy than with theology as such. Prof. Nels Ferre in his book *Swedish Contributions to Modern Theology* speaks of the "unholy ambition on the part of talented theologians to wear the bishop's robes" as one reason why Swedish theology was slow in coming to the front. It is true that three-fourths of the present Swedish episcopate have come from the universities, but whether this is altogether a detriment to the church and to theology may be debated. In the light of the New Testament it can hardly be said that such an ambition would be "unholy", for Paul says that "if a man seeketh the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work" (I Tim. 3:1). It speaks well for the Swedish Church that it desires its best trained men to fill its highest offices, and not a few of these men have continued to make scholarly contributions in the field of theology after assuming the office of bishop.

By nature the Swede is rather conservative, and conservatism has also been a notable characteristic of the Swedish Church. In and by itself this should not constitute a hindrance to theological productivity, but it might do so if and when conservatism expresses itself as a love for the *status quo* and if adherence to traditional forms becomes synonymous with correctness of teaching.

These may be some of the reasons for the comparative lateness of any distinctive school of Swedish theology; but one must not draw the conclusion that no contributions whatsoever were made prior to the coming of the present century. About the middle of the 19th century we find two theologians at the university of Lund that are worthy of our consideration, namely J. H. Thomander and Henrik Reuterdaahl.

Thomander was in all respects a powerful and influential per-

sonality. There was hardly any department within the Church that was not in some way affected by his untiring activity. As an educator he was largely responsible for the coming of a religiously and culturally new generation of ministers. Thomander did not produce any independent theological system of his own; revivification of Lutheranism was the ultimate goal he set for his endeavors. Like Luther he recognized that dogmatic formulas are the products of their own time and should not, therefore, be considered as absolute and binding for all times. Formulations of dogmas must, he maintained, be subservient to the progress of true science.

Reuterdaahl was more of a creative scholar than Thomander, but neither can he be classified as independent, since he based his theology mainly on that of Schleiermacher, whose first representative of importance he was as far as Sweden is concerned. Untrammelled freedom for the pursuit of scientific investigation and a real ecumenical interest in religion were principles that marked the life and efforts of Reuterdaahl, and in this he was far in advance of his own time. He admonished the ministers of the Church to remain students, "because", he says, "scientific research does not only belong to the university, as piety and practical endeavors should not be the particular possession of the ministry" (*Theologisk Quartalskrift*, 1836, p. 114).

Reuterdaahl places theology on the same level as any other science; it is neither a divine product nor a revelation. No branch of science can claim to have fallen from the skies, while other branches must through laborious efforts be developed here on earth.

Regarding the handling of the Scriptures this teacher affirms that exegesis must follow the same methods that are used with reference to other historical records. The Word can have nothing to fear if subjected to methods of investigation that are not considered too radical with respect to other, "human", writings. Repeatedly Reuterdaahl warns against "Bibliolatry" and bemoans the fact that the Bible has been accorded a place equal to and even above Christ in importance. First to accept the divine origin of Scripture and then from these premises to prove the divinity of Jesus, is to reason backwards.

Reuterdaahl's treatment of the confessional writings of the Church proceeds along similar lines. He holds that the Confessions have an historical value; they indicate what the Church pro-

ducing and accepting them once and for all would have established as the correct expression of faith and practice. They can, however, be subjected to a wrong use; that takes place when they are made binding on conscience, so that every one who does not believe ALL they contain is looked on as a heretic.

As Reuterdaahl did much to make Swedish theologians familiar with the work of Schleiermacher, so another clergyman, by the name of *Fredrik Fehr*, became the representative of Ritschl within the Swedish Church. He too held opinions regarding the Confessions that must have been considered quite radical for his day. The Confessions are, after all, the work of men and should therefore not be absolutely binding on the conscience of any one. In his own words he would have formulated the confession of his Church in the following way:

"The Swedish Church, in accord with the decision of the Council of Uppsala, makes the Gospel of Jesus Christ as that is originally stated in Holy Scriptures and explained in accord with the spirit of the Augsburg Confession, its confession." (S. A. Fries, *Fredrik Fehr*, p. 69).

The work of Fehr was not that of a creative spirit, but his labors, nevertheless, did much for the introduction of a new spirit into the church of his native country.

Fehr died in 1895, only forty-six years old. His theological mantle fell on a pastor in Stockholm named *S. A. Fries*. He was more of a scientist than Fehr had been, and his interests were especially along exegetical lines. He accepted and followed the theories of Wellhausen and was of the opinion that critical and scientific investigation in matters of religion and theology should not be hindered, but given full freedom, since they in no way injure the faith of the Church (Edw. Rodhe, *Svenska kyrkan omkring sekelskiftet*, p. 12). Fries also lays great stress on the "Gospel of Jesus", and by it he desires to test the confessional writings of the Church. Luther, of course, he accepts, and looks to him as to a "father of faith"; but he makes a distinction between the "scholastic" and the "evangelical Luther". The former he would reject, but the latter he owns as his master.

The field of systematic theology proper does not seem to offer much for our consideration from this period. The name of Professor *Pehr Eklund*, however, should not be omitted here. Like

Fehr, Eklund had been led by Ritschl to a deeper study and a greater appreciation of Luther. Eklund was first of all a real churchman, for whom all theology was founded in the life of the Church, which life theology in turn was called on to purify and strengthen. As a theologian he never became affiliated with any one school, but remained rather independent, although he owed much to both Martensen of Denmark and to Schleiermacher. He felt it to be a part of his calling as a teacher and a theologian to cultivate and to express something that would be distinctively Swedish. In this respect his place as a pioneer can not be called into question.

In the year 1893 Dr. W. Rudin was installed as professor of New Testament exegesis at Uppsala. In the address which he delivered at his installation he champions the idea that besides the divine element in Scripture there is also a human side to be reckoned with. The Bible has come into being by a process of evolution much like that connected with any other group of historical writings. This, however, he maintains, should not preclude the acceptance of the books of the Bible as the bearers of divine revelation. Thus Rudin is evidently endeavoring to give due recognition to scientific investigation while at the same time he desires to uphold the religious authority of the Bible.

Just at the turn of the century the association of "Scandinavian Christian Students" held a meeting in Sweden, on which occasion Professor Erik Stave gave an address that caused a great deal of comment among the ecclesiastics of the land. In this address Stave dealt with the influence of Biblical criticism on faith. Scientific methods of inquiry need not at all disturb the mind of the Christian. On the other hand, if, because of fear, historic and critical investigation of the Bible would be opposed, serious consequences might result, for by so doing both interest in and love for truth might be militated against. The interests of both faith and truth must be safeguarded. "Faith, in the religious sense, means to have found salvation and freedom in Jesus Christ. The essence of faith is to be found in the soul's direct communion with God without the aid of any external authority. This principle is the great inheritance of the Lutheran Reformation, and with this inheritance we are liberated not only from all external authority, but also from all fear of the criticism brought forth by theological and Biblical experts" (Edw. Rodhe, *Svenska kyrkan omkring sekelskiftet*, p. 175).

Besides these phenomena which deal with the theological realm, there were also other factors making themselves felt in the thought-life of Sweden. Philosophically idealism held sway in Sweden during the latter half of the 19th century. It had been championed by Sweden's greatest philosopher, Christopher Jakob Boström, and by his able disciple, Pontus Vikner. In the main theologians did not welcome this phenomenon, and much ink was used in battling this undermining of strict traditionalism.

This period also produced other men of importance who were greatly influential in moulding the thought-life of the younger generation. One of these was the venerated Viktor Rydberg, a very gifted personalistic idealist, a champion of liberalism, and withal a literary genius. He published a work entitled *BIBLENS LÄRA OM KRISTUS*—The Teachings of the Bible Regarding Christ—which presented a rather humanized picture of the Saviour and caused a great deal of discussion, not to say strife. While this work only indirectly influenced theology it did receive acceptance among the cultured laity. Rydberg's contribution to the cultural life of Sweden, however, was not made along theological lines but came rather through his philosophical concepts.

It is hard, if not altogether impossible, to estimate adequately the influence which such men as Boström, Vikner, Rydberg, and others have exerted on the thinking of Sweden, of its students especially. There were many who saw in these men the prophets of a new day and hailed them as champions of liberalism and as liberators from the shackles of frigid traditionalism.

Viewing the totality of the theological situation in Sweden, even during the closing decades of the last century, one must admit that the Church was not ready to leave the safe moorings of traditional orthodoxy. The men whose individual contributions we have endeavored briefly to sketch thus far were quite exceptional in their outlook, and they were often made to feel that their utterances were anything but welcome. The majority of the theological professors were as a rule more than suspicious of the "innovations" or rather the "importations" that were promulgated by some of the university men and by others, like Fehr and Fries, who were pastors and leaders within the Church. The bishops also were of the conservative type and had no desire to leave the theological *status quo*. Theological and church periodicals of the time carried a num-

ber of articles of an anti-Ritschlian and anti-liberal character. Fehr was attacked in a pamphlet even after his death, but was ably defended by Nathan Söderblom, then pastor of the Swedish congregation in Paris. It is interesting to note the number of articles and pamphlets that came from the presses in Sweden during the last decade of the 19th century discussing the Ritschlian theology pro and con. The best exposition of this matter was given by Professor O. F. Myrberg, whose writing on the subject is characterized by a great deal of objectivity. The theology of Ritschl, according to this writer, was a mixture of good and bad elements. It is correct to seek the pivotal point of Christianity in the practical-religious and ethical realm of life rather than in metaphysical questions. Ritschl was right also in making the historical Jesus Christ the criterion by which to measure that which would be essential in Christianity. On the other hand, the system of Ritschl was on a rather shaky foundation and made somewhat of a caricature of Christianity because it had its real basis in Kantian philosophy rather than in a genuine Christian theology. Myrberg also called attention to the fact that Ritschl had failed to take due cognizance of the holiness of God, and that His righteousness and retributive justice had not been properly accentuated. Myrberg also finds that Fehr had not followed Ritschl slavishly. In fact, while his writing is a polemic against Ritschl, he defends Fehr against his accusers and shows that what the latter had in mind was simply to liberate the Gospel once and for all delivered through Christ, a Gospel which the Reformation had restored to mankind, and to which Luther and many with him had adhered with mind and soul.

The clergy of the Church could naturally not remain aloof and disinterested in this matter. They also were studying and discussing the theology of Ritschl, and at a pastoral conference in 1895 the topic for consideration was set forth in a volume by Th. Stenhammar entitled "Reconciliation, Studies in Connection with the Ritschlian Theology."

Besides these strictly theological considerations there were also other movements within the Church of Sweden during the 19th century that deserve our attention in this connection.

Henrik Schartau (d. 1825) had been instrumental in breaking the influence of the theology of the Enlightenment, especially in the southern part of the country. Pietistic strains, orthodoxy, and a

direct dependence on Luther are amalgamated in Schartau. In the interest of assurance of salvation he sought to delineate and clarify the activity of the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian. His presentation is marked by a deep insight into the life of the soul, by religious depth and ethical fervor; and his writings have been of great value in the guidance and the fostering of religious life. Influences from Pietism led him perhaps to overaccentuate self-reflection on the part of the Christian, but he differs from Pietism in his emphasis of the objectivity of the means of grace, as also in his strong regard for the ministry of the Church, and by his criticism of all endeavors to establish any *ecclesiola in ecclesia*. Schartau was a churchman and, above all, a true shepherd of souls. For a number of years he preached in the Cathedral of Lund and became especially noted for his catechetical instruction, in which he was a recognized master. While many heard him gladly as a preacher and were benefited by his instruction and guidance in spiritual matters, he, nevertheless, exerted his greatest influence through his writings, published mainly after his death. It is safe to say that the legacy of this man has been and still is of no small importance in the ecclesiastical and religious life of his native country.

C. O. Rosenius (d. 1868) is another religious leader whose life and activity have left distinct marks not only in Sweden, but, through the early immigrants, also among Swedish people in this country. His father, a pastor in the Lutheran Church, was deeply religious, often working together with the Pietists, or, as they were called, "the readers"—*läsarna*—an appellation given them for their avidity in reading the Scriptures. The son inherited many of his father's traits, and his life was characterized by a rather other-worldliness, which made it difficult for him to appreciate and to take part in matters that concerned themselves with this life even if they were of an innocent nature. Rosenius planned to become a pastor, but his plans were never realized because conditions at the University of Uppsala were not to his liking. He objected both to the secular subjects that were a part of the curriculum and to what he regarded as a lack of real spirituality among the students. Beset with doubts he left the university and went to Stockholm to seek an English Methodist pastor, George Scott, who at that time was ministering to his countrymen in Stockholm. Through the guidance of Scott, Rosenius seems to have come to assurance in religious mat-

ters. He soon gave up also all thought of becoming an ordained pastor and desired to work as a "free evangelical missionary". In the awakening that took place in Sweden about the middle of the 19th century Rosenius was one of the leading spirits. His preaching was characterized by a strong evangelical note. Had Schartau stressed the idea of *Christus in nobis*, Rosenius just as strongly, and perhaps even more so, set forth the value of *Christus pro nobis*. That salvation is *sola gratia*, that the world is justified in and through Christ, these were the favorite themes of his sermons. "Come as thou art" was his slogan. The danger that this kind of an approach might lead to a hyper-evangelical antinomianism was offset by his equally strong demands that believers sincerely strive to attain to an ever greater degree of sanctification.

Rosenius differed from Luther in that he was unable to attain unto that affirmation of life in general that characterized the great Reformer. He did not see that in the Gospel there is both a *Gabe* and an *Aufgabe*.

In the main Rosenius placed a high value on the established Church. He considered himself in perfect alliance with it and did not wish that his followers should form any independent groups or organizations. Subsequent history, however, shows that the theory of the leader did not coincide with actual practice.

While the movements led by Schartau and Rosenius resulted in the deepening of the religious life largely within the Church, the 19th century saw also the coming of another man and another movement that caused a great deal of theological debate and finally resulted in the organization of a new ecclesiastical group, the so called Mission Covenant. This man was the notable *P. P. Waldenström* (d. 1917).

"God is good"—this is the center of Waldenström's theology. By this he means that God is good as to His nature, and consequently there can be no change in His attitude to man. Not even the fall into sin made any change in God's eternal attitude of love for man. God is the subject in the act of reconciliation. He need not be reconciled since His love and good will are ever the same. It is man, the sinner and the enemy of God, who needs to be reconciled. Jesus is altogether God's representative in revealing the love of the Father and can consequently not *quo homo* offer any satisfaction to God. There is no satisfaction necessary as far as God is

concerned. What is necessary is that man obtain a right concept of God, that man's enmity be overcome, and this is accomplished through the death of Christ. Categories like redemption and deliverance cannot, says Waldenström, be employed in connection with reconciliation. In this there is nothing that can have reference to a price paid. To be redeemed is to be delivered from all evil, including that of sin, and to stand before the throne of God holy, just, and blessed. Men are constantly being redeemed; they become redeemed when they believe. This means that reconciliation, justification, and sanctification become nearly, if not altogether, one and the same thing.

Waldenström had never, like Luther, experienced the power of the Law and the terribleness of the wrath of God. As a result, with him divine love becomes synonymous with nearness and intimacy, and this, in turn, is reflected in the communion of the believer with God, which also becomes rather too profane and intimate. God appeared to him more under the image of a "good uncle" than that of a Holy and Righteous Majesty.

The strife caused by Waldenström through his promulgation of the above mentioned theory of the Atonement gave rise to another question, that regarding the nature of the Church. Seemingly Waldenström stressed the idea and need of sanctification, "Jesus," he says, "does not only forgive our sins, He also makes us partakers of His own essential righteousness." That may sound good and well. In practice, however, it was often found that the righteousness acquired was of a rather external sort and was to be safeguarded by, if not actually founded in, the establishment of new groups where believers, and believers only, could fellowship together. Thus was born the aforementioned Mission Covenant, which has a branch also here in our country (with a college and seminary in Chicago).

We are fully conscious of the fact that our presentation thus far has been rather disconnected, and most likely not very interesting, except perhaps to one who has had some contact with the country and the Church of Sweden. We have endeavored, however, to present somewhat of a picture of that which belongs to the background of modern Swedish theology, and we cannot assume any blame for the fact that there has not been more to tell.

Theologically Sweden has had much in common with other European nations, notably that of Germany. There has been refor-

mation, rationalistic orthodoxy, rationalism, cold formalism, and pietism, each weaving in the particular strands which together make up the ecclesiastical and theological fabric. In that fabric we find, too, the contributions of individual pioneers and leaders, both to the right and to the left, who dreamed of new and better things. The 19th century, and especially its latter half, is marked by struggles of various kinds, and all of this enters, we believe, into the background of that which has been accomplished more recently by theologians in Sweden. We shall have to leave the picture of the background just as we have sought to present it, for it is not possible to say that any one element is solely responsible for the development that has taken place.

III. *The Swedish Bible.*

The Reformation Church of Sweden quite early saw to it that its members got the Bible in their native tongue. The impetus for translating the Scriptures into Swedish came from Gustavus Vasa, who was king of the realm from 1523 to 1560. He desired that the people should have the opportunity to examine the Scriptures for themselves in order to ascertain whether the teachings of the Reformation were true or not. The year 1526 saw the publication of the first Swedish New Testament, the translation itself being mainly at least the work of Olavus Petri. The entire Bible appeared in 1541. This shows a great dependence on Luther, and the order of the books is the same as that of the Luther Bible of 1534. In the index of the books of the New Testament Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation are placed at the end of the list and are not included in the numeration followed with respect to the other books. This Bible is termed the "Gustavus Vasa Bible". It was never looked on as being final, and was never regarded as perfect in its linguistic form.

The next official Bible, the Gustavus Adolphus Bible, was issued in 1618. In this Bible we meet an innovation which, as far as we know, lacks a counterpart in any "official Bible". The four books Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation, now appear under the heading *Apocrypha Novi Testamenti* and are numbered 1-4.

Next came the Bible of Charles XII, issued in 1703. In this the aforementioned books no longer appear as *Apocrypha*, but are given

their usual place in the order of the books of the New Testament. Luther's introduction to Hebrews, James, and Jude is excised "on good and valid reasons", as the editor, Benzeliuss, states in his preface to this Bible.

The so called "Standard or Normal Edition" of the Bible dates from 1883. Textually this is based on *Textus Receptus*.

The latest Swedish Bible was published in connection with the four-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation and has replaced the edition of 1883 as the standard Bible of the Swedish Church. The translators of this edition made use of all the various texts at their disposal. Archbishop Eidem, himself a member of the translation commission, states that in his opinion the new Swedish Bible is based on a text that would come closest to that of E. Nestle.

There is much that could be said by way of a characterization of this Bible, but this would hardly belong to our present purpose. One of the most notable instances in which it differs from the older translations is the omission of the definite article in the translation of the Greek *Pneuma Hagion*. Let us give a couple of quotations to indicate how this works out in the translation Luke 4:1: "And Jesus returned from the Jordan full of holy spirit"; Acts 2:4: "And they were all filled with holy spirit"; Acts 7:55: "But he, full of holy spirit, looked up to heaven." In no case when the article is omitted are the two words holy and spirit capitalized. There are, however, seventeen places where the article is not omitted and where the translation takes the old form of "The Holy Spirit".

Linguistically the new Swedish Bible differs greatly from its predecessors: While it possesses the dignity that should characterize such a work, it employs the language of the present, the language of the people for whom it is intended.

PART TWO: THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

"I congratulate you who are permitted to study theology in this era."

These words were addressed to the theological students at Uppsala University by Dr. Nathan Söderblom when in 1901 he was installed as professor of theology at that institution. In the same address Söderblom calls attention to the fact that the Christian Church then found itself in a theological crisis. Some of the things

that an older generation had been accustomed to consider indispensable for its faith had seemingly lost part of their value, as a result of scientific and critical investigation. He tells his students, however, not to be daunted by this fact nor fear to enter still more deeply into their investigations. New light shall be given, he assures his hearers, but that light shall be commensurate with their own appreciation of truth and life, and dependent on their regard for the reality of history.

This address by Söderblom made a deep impression. To the students it seemed that a new day had dawned, for sentiments of this kind could not have been expressed by a theological professor in a previous day when academic freedom had been rather suspect. Bishop Aulen, then a student at Uppsala and present at the installation of Söderblom, has characterized the address referred to in the following words:

"The words with which the new professor greeted the students still ring in my ears. — It was not the frightened spirit of defense, but a bold and conquering spirit, that spoke here. — It was like an electrifying fanfare, and it awakened a lively response in the young minds" (G. Aulen, "Nathan Söderblom", *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift*, 1926, p. 4).

The coming of the twentieth century marked the beginning of a new day for Swedish theology. Traditionalism and rationalistic orthodoxy were now beginning to lose their grip on theological thinking, and a new spirit, "bold and conquering," as Aulen puts it, was being heard. At the start of this century the foundations were being laid upon which subsequent Swedish theology has been built, much to the credit of two men who then became theological professors at Uppsala, *Nathan Söderblom* and *Einar Billing*. We shall now endeavor to present a summary of the positions of these men and of their contributions to the science of theology.

NATHAN SÖDERBLOM.

Söderblom was well prepared for the great work that he was to perform as a theologian and as a leader of his Church. Having completed his preliminary training at Uppsala he became pastor of the Swedish congregation in Paris. While in Paris he studied at Sorbonne and received his doctor's degree at that institution in 1901, majoring in History of Religion. That same year he was appointed professor of theology at Uppsala, a position which he held until

1912, when he was called by the University of Leipzig as professor of History of Religion. From 1914 to the time of his death, in 1931, he was the Primate of the Swedish Church. He was a man of wide interests, both as a scholar and as a churchman. The former is attested to by his numerous publications; books, pamphlets, and articles that came from his pen number over 670. And the latter is seen in the fact that he was the recognized leader in the Ecumenical Movement of his day.

It would have been strange indeed if a man like Söderblom should not have sought contact with the most noted teachers and teaching of his day. This he did, and became a student and—to some extent—a follower of Ritschl. In later years he has given us a description of his reactions on becoming more familiar with Ritschl's theology. Concerning this he says: "I date my new insight from an evening when I read an article in *Theologische Literaturzeitung*. I did not understand it all; but the Kingdom of God and His way with us were placed in the center. The room seemed to become lighter than before, and a new joy came over me. It was not a *book* that we must put our trust in, but in *God*, who through Christ has founded His kingdom among us. The writing of the Bible was also a work that had its origin in God, but Christianity was no longer a religion of a book, but an historical revelation, culminating in Christ. The Sermon on the Mount was no longer something preliminary, but, like the Cross, the center and part of the most holy. These two could not be separated. Once more we had a Christ with power and authority. We had a Christianity with austere seriousness and ethical savor. — We should have understood this better from the beginning if we had apprehended the organic and dynamic nature of the Kingdom of God, if we had perceived that what Jesus proclaimed was the Kingship of God rather than the Kingdom of God" (*Kristi församlings väg i denna tid*, 1919).

While Söderblom recognizes his debt to Ritschl he never follows him slavishly. He even offers rather strong criticism of Ritschl and accuses him of having read his own ideas into the Scriptures, saying, among other things, that the Sermon on the Mount cannot be understood in its sharp uncompromising absoluteness without the eschatological, transcendental, and immeasurable character of the Kingdom of God.

Söderblom's theological and ecclesiastical contributions can be classified under five main headings, namely Revelation; the Problem of the Church; Luther Research; the Cross (or the meaning of the life and work of Christ); and the Ecumenical Problem. We cannot examine all of these in detail, but shall try to indicate at least the main trend of his thought.

In 1903 Söderblom published a volume entitled *UPPENBAR-ELSERELIGION*, published in English in 1933 under the title "The Nature of Revelation". This is an epochmaking volume and could well be called the author's *declaration of independence*. In this work Söderblom works with the following principles:

1. Religion must be religiously evaluated. Neither ethical nor cultural criteria can be used as a basis in analyzing that which is religious. Here he breaks with his contemporary theology, which desired to make use of these criteria. He presents the idea of *the Holy* as the most adequate expression for religion, and it is interesting to note that in this respect he antedates Rudolph Otto, whose book *Das Heilige* was published in 1917.
2. In the second place, Söderblom strongly accentuates the meaning of eschatology for what he terms "the prophetic line of religion." He shows how the religion of the Bible by reason of its eschatological emphasis differs from nature and culture religions, and in so doing he points to an important aspect of Christianity which up to that time had been largely neglected, but which since then has received a great deal of consideration.
3. In the next place the author gives consideration to the dualistic concept that is found in Christianity. He points out that in Christianity there is a dualism that sharply differs from that which was characteristic of Hellenism, with its dualism of nature and spirit. Here is a dualism between God and the devil; between the divine, victorious will of love and radical, inexplicable evil; between life and death, confidence and despair, heaven and hell. "Jesus has sharpened this dualism, not weakened it. No one has penetrated deeper into the problem of evil than He with the words: 'An enemy hath done this.' Jesus presents no theodicy, no defense for God in the existing terrible and mysterious trial of sin and misery. All attempts within Christianity to escape from or to get over this dualism have either weakened the power which lies in the courageous

realism of the Gospel, or else led to the absurdity of putting the dualism in the very being of God" (Op. Cit. p. 66).

Other religions, like that of Buddha for instance, have failed because they have not sufficiently sounded the depths of suffering. "The power of a religion is not to be judged by its hymns of praise, but by its experience of the misery and darkness of life. Only one religion has gone as far down into the abyss as the pain of the world—this religion is Christianity" (Op. Cit. p. 64). Yet this religion is one of optimism, because it can put an eternal *Yea* against all *Nay*, for the promises of God are *yea* in Christ Jesus (II Cor. 1:20).

4. We have now come to that which is most characteristic in the volume under consideration, namely the distinction between what Söderblom terms *öändlighetsmystik* and *personlighetsmystik*. Here again we notice that Söderblom takes a position that is rather opposite to that of Ritschl with his polemic against all mysticism, the reason being that Söderblom saw that the concept of mysticism *per se* could not be ruled out of Christianity without doing violence to a very basic element in the Christian religion. Since the English language does not possess the exact equivalents to the terms used by Söderblom, we must employ a circumlocution to clarify the idea involved. The *öändlighetsmystik* of which Söderblom speaks stands as the very opposite to revealed religion. It implies a negation of personality, an ecstatic communion with God, and an ultimate absorption into divinity (see pp. 74 ff. in the *Nature of Revelation*). The latter expression, *personlighetsmystik*, is a personality-affirming mysticism. It is a *via positionis* which leads through a complete self-renunciation and self-denial to a richer and stronger personal life. It does not, however, know of any way by which man can raise himself into communion with God. It depends on the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. "It does not know a higher attitude toward God and a richer fulness of God than in the highest endowment of life; personal love built on the foundation of a living trust in God" (Op. Cit. p. 76).

While Söderblom does not use the terms *eros* and *agape*—later employed by Nygren—the distinction is, nevertheless, the same. On the one hand, there is man's striving to attain unto divine fulness. On the other, there is God revealing Himself to man. On

the one side is natural religion and on the other is revealed religion. Revelation is not static in character, but dynamic, in keeping with the saying of Jesus about the Father "who works till now." It is therefore progressive in nature and is given in its sublime fulness in the person of Jesus and in the Biblical record, but, being progressive, it continues also in the present and comes to us also through creative geniuses, through history, and in the regeneration and sanctification of the individual.

We might summarize our presentation thus far by saying that what Söderblom desires to set forth and to emphasize is that the God of Christian faith is the living and ever active God.

THE IDEA OF THE CHURCH.

There is a close relationship between Söderblom's idea of revelation and that of the Church. The Church is the expression of God's activity in the world. The Church is not an abstract idea, it is a reality in the world of history and possesses both body and soul. The body, organization, is essential if the Church is to fulfill its mission, but its form is not a divine institution. The purpose of the Church is to bring to human souls the Gospel of salvation. All else that the Church is and does has its worth only as a means for the accomplishment of this purpose.

Söderblom is hopeful for the Church of his native land. He speaks of its treasures. He is a realist in this respect, and he knows what the Church of Sweden might mean for its people. He is also a universalist in the sense that he views his own Church as a part of the universal, apostolic, and catholic Church. In this respect he did much to break the spirit of isolation that had characterized the Swedish Church during the 19th century.

LUTHER RESEARCH

Söderblom was a pioneer among Swedish scholars in the field of Luther research. So extensive was his work in this particular field that one might say that most of his writings to some extent deal with Luther. In *Humor och melankoli* (Humor and Melancholy), published in 1919, Söderblom approaches the study of Luther from the psychological point of view, setting forth especially the meaning and import of Luther's *terrores conscientiae*. He sees in Luther an example of the mysticism of personality of which we

have already spoken. It will not do, says the author, to separate Luther from the religious life that preceded him. He must be seen from the point of view of the Church Universal, and when this is done Luther will stand forth as the true representative of classical Christianity, he is the herold of the old Gospel after a period of delusion and darkness.

Through his work in this field Söderblom laid the foundation and pointed the way for a number of scholars that were to follow; but of this we shall speak later.

THE CROSS—THE LIFE AND WORK OF CHRIST

Many of the thoughts that are characteristic of present day Swedish theology are discernible in Söderblom. It has been said that the theology of Söderblom is altogether Christo-centric, but that it does not express itself in the old formulæ of the Scholastic period, nor does it go to the opposite extreme in denying the divine mystery that is connected with the person of Jesus Christ. A brief quotation will show the trend of his thought in this respect: "That Jesus became the Saviour of the world depended not only on His moral beauty, but in the first place on the mystery of that endowment which was bestowed on Him from His birth. Revelation has to do not only with the holiness of Christ but also with the miracle in His nature" (*Uppenbarelsereligion*, p. 121 f.).

In another place he says: "Modern theology has not fulfilled its obligation until it has expressed Christianity in a way that is more true, deeper, and more correct than has been the custom, and given a more central place to Christ than that given Him by the theology of a former age."

While the thought seems strange to him, yet he expresses the idea that suffering is not foreign to God, and that He shares in our sufferings. The Cross is the high point in this suffering, or, as he calls it, the drama of redemption. In his book *The Story of Christ's Passion* he states that the Cross expresses two mighty truths, those of the terribleness of sin and the greatness of the love of God.

When some German theologians asked Söderblom to give a brief statement as to his own theological position he gave the following answer: "*Zentrum meiner Theologi ist das Geheimnis des stellvertretenden Leidens Christi*". Yet it may be that he has his

own way of interpreting the meaning of this phrase. Certainly he differs from Anselm with respect to the idea of the Atonement, as can be seen from the following quotation: "I plead no blasphemous doctrine of any change in the nature of God, nor any sacrificial theory of the pagans. What I plead for is that which is the very essence of Christianity, which since the days of Paul has been a stumbling block for all rationalists, pious or not" (*Gå vi mot religionens förnyelse?* p. 11).

Yet he can also say: "Let me state that for me *one* dogma is more important than all else. He who has no appreciation of this dogma may be ever so zealous for the letter of Scripture, for all other dogma and traditional teachings; all this will have no value if in any degree he vitiates the very kernel of Christianity, which is the mystery of the Cross—mine and numberless other Christians' highest and only comfort in life and death" (*Ibid.* p. 11).

If any one would be interested in following more closely the ideas of Söderblom with respect to the Atonement, we recommend his book *Kristi pinas historia*, part of which is available in English under the title *THE MYSTERY OF THE CROSS*.

THE ECUMENICAL PROBLEM.

The contributions Söderblom made toward the furtherance of the ecumenical idea are quite well known. Any one who is somewhat familiar with the history of this movement is aware of the fact that Söderblom was the moving spirit in bringing about the Ecumenical Conference on Life and Work in Stockholm in 1925. It is therefore needless to dwell on any of these historical details; instead we shall give some attention to the question of how the theology of Söderblom integrated itself with his endeavors on behalf of the Ecumenical Movement.

With Söderblom his interest in the ecumenicity of the Church was somewhat of a religious imperative. The condition of the time, together with his own unique personality, certainly had something to do with his concern for a more unified Christendom; but underlying all this, as a mighty prerequisite, was his own theological position.

Two aspects are to be noted in this connection. The first is his universal perspective, and the other is his zeal for that which is

central and "classical" in Christianity. He therefore strove first of all to arrive at an understanding, comparatively speaking at least, in essentials rather than all at once to bring the sum total of Christian thinking into the foreground. Concerning this he says: "Ecclesiastical universalism is more surely obtained by grasping and by following up the essential than by trying to embrace a multiplicity of things." This did not mean that he was ready to compromise his own position as a Lutheran, a fact that is borne out by his contributions at Lusanne in 1927.

We have dealt at some length with the theology of Söderblom, not because we consider him and his contribution to be "the last word" in Swedish theology, but because to us at least it seems rather problematic whether Sweden today could have had a distinctive theology if it had not been for the pioneering work of this man. He gave an impetus to scholarly research and theological productivity that has borne rich fruit. Bishop Aulen says of Söderblom that "he created in our country an atmosphere in which theological investigation and study could feel at home, and he gave life to a daring and conquering spirit" (Aulen, "*Svensk teologisk kvartalsskrift*", 1926, p. 4).

EINAR BILLING

Einar Billing was a contemporary of Söderblom. He became *docent* at Uppsala and professor of theology at that University in 1908, continuing in that capacity till 1920 when he was elected bishop of the Diocese of Västerås, a position which he held till his death in 1940.

It is not at all surprising that Billing, like all other theologians of note and importance, derived much of his inspiration and theological insight from Luther. In the year 1900 he published a Luther study entitled *Luthers lära om staten* (The Teaching of Luther Regarding the State). This was followed by other publications that either dealt with or were strongly influenced by the writings of Luther. So much so was this the case that it would be a safe assertion that Billing's theological position was orientated and determined by his study and interpretation of the great German Reformer. To Billing therefore as much as to Söderblom goes the honor of being a pioneer in the field of Luther research among the

theologians of Sweden. While Söderblom approaches Luther more from the psychological point of view, Billing studies Luther from the point of view of a systematic theologian.

In his *Episcopal Letter*, published in connection with his consecration as bishop, Billing speaks of his early experiences as a theological student and of the inner struggles that his first acquaintance with Wellhausen caused him. Concerning this he writes: "Never will I forget the agony this study caused me. It was like an earthquake; everything seemed to give way under my feet." It was then that another German, Franz Delitzsch, pointed the way that led to tranquility and assurance. Delitzsch had incorporated some of Wellhausen's theories in the new edition of his *Commentary on Genesis* and prefaced this by referring to this word of Job: "Will ye contend for God?" (Job 13:8). "This was just the word I needed. It could not solve all the problems for me, but in that it placed me before the demand of truth as one of the highest of religious obligations it gave me courage to await further light and to hope that for the upright 'God will let it come to pass.'"—Thus Billing describes his reactions to the problems that met him as a young student of theology.

Today we are accustomed to speak of a "theology of crisis", and the School of Dialectic Theology has built its system of doctrine with a view to this "crisis". Billing too can be classified as a "crisis theologian", and as such he antedates Barth and Brunner. In 1907 Billing published a volume under the title: *De etiska tankarna i urkristendomen* (The Ethical Concept of Ancient Christianity). A new edition of this work came from the press in 1936. In this important work, well worth an intense study by pastors and teachers, we find ample proof of the fact that the author was conscious of a deep crisis in theology, but it was a crisis different from that spoken of by the Barthians. Their idea of the crisis had come partly from their own, more external circumstances of life, and partly from their desire to liberate theology from the shackles of psychology and idealistic philosophy, which forces, as they claim, had to no small degree reshaped Christianity, given an idealized place and importance to man, and through its humanization of God robbed Him of His power and majesty. To counteract all this it would now be the aim and purpose of this new theology to emphasize once more

distance between himself and God, who is the Judge of all things human.

Billing recognizes all this. He is aware of the fact that the crisis in theology had to do with the very essence of Christianity, and he could be satisfied neither with a traditional Scholastic theology that was more concerned with forms than content, nor with an idealistic approach that failed to penetrate to the very foundation of Christianity. As we have noted above, there had been a crisis in Billing's own life, and he could therefore understand that which took place within the field of religion and theology. While quite early he had formulated his own standpoint he nevertheless continued his work in a spirit of seriousness as he grappled with the problems at hand. There is no superficiality in Billing; he digs deep, and is therefore at times hard to follow. While the dialectical theology in the main is negative in its approach, and therefore "onesided", Billing deals with the crisis as he sees it, in a positive way, and is therefore, as far as he himself is concerned, able to overcome the crisis. If we were to seek the reason for this, it would no doubt be found in Billing's study of and dependence on Luther. He was able to discern Luther's religious motives, and it was because of this that He could meet traditional problems and also arrive at a deepening of the religious concepts.

As to methodology Billing is of the opinion that theology should not endeavor to present psychology nor build an elaborate logical system. Its aim and purpose, on the other hand, should be to describe Truth, especially as it is found in the way of God with mankind. In this respect the theologian should be akin to the prophet, for the truth to be set forth is life, love, judgment, and restoration. There is a realism in the theology of Billing, as it undertakes to describe what God does with and for man. He is an historian who knows how to read the events of the past and interpret their meaning for the present, for Billing firmly believes in a God who works also in the present moment. For him religious history is concentrated in one point, it is summarized in one expression: "the forgiveness of sin" or "justification by faith." Back of this stands the idea of "election", how God has called Israel and others to be His people, and how He still calls nations and individuals to fellowship with Himself. That means, on the one hand,

his own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him. That does not mean that election and grace should be divorced from the concepts of righteousness and the moral qualities of the new life. There is a tension between grace and righteousness, and the former is seen in its deep significance only with righteousness as a background, and this guards against the thought that grace should in any way be qualified with "merits" or that God should "owe" man anything in the way of salvation.

Billing has much to say concerning the subject of the "Word". He sees the Word not only as a message from a God who is far removed from His creation—a *DEUS ABSCONDITUS*—but as a living reality, a Word in action, declaring the grace of God to man. The prophets of old were the heralds and proclaimers of this Word, but it finds its culmination in Jesus Christ. Concerning this he speaks as follows: "When we see that the pronouncements of Jesus constitute a 'message' in words as well as in deeds, then we also realize how full that message is of the idea of forgiveness. . . . If the forgiveness of sin is to be something more than just another paragraph among thousand others in a system of dogmatics, if it is to become the center of Christianity, religion in its very essence, then this concept can have no other meaning than this that we, in spite of our sin, can have a God who as a Helper is present with us, and that we can also have the assurance of this fact" (*De etiska tankarna i urkristendomen*, p. 23).

The life work of Jesus is depicted against the background of judgment, and His message is freighted with eschatological considerations. The revelation of God is portrayed as a "drama"; there is a struggle to be entered into and enemies to overcome. Through the Word God still acts upon us and for us. Through it He invites us to come and establishes for us communion with Himself. The Word is also the means of grace through which the Spirit works and is bestowed on our hearts.

To sum up the position of Einar Billing in Swedish theology we desire to quote a statement made by Bishop Runestam: "Billing has given us an independent interpretation of the thought-world of Hellas; he has reinterpreted for us the meaning of the message of the prophets and of the religion of Christ and Paul. He was a pioneer in modern exegesis. By his depth as a student of Luther he has laid the foundations for further Luther Research in

our country. In an era when liberalism threatened Lutheran theology he has restored the idea of the Atonement for us to its proper place. In keeping with Luther he has spoken regarding the Word and regarding the activity of God through the Word, in a way that has made us immune to the excesses of Barthianism and aided Swedish theology to set forth more clearly than any other theology, Luther's idea of the Church. He has rediscovered Luther's concept concerning our calling and through his classical writing on the subject again made it living and real for our generation" (Runestam: *Svensk teologisk kvartalsskrift*, 1940, p. 86).

Billing was a pioneer and a positive influence in Swedish theology. For that reason we have deemed it advisable somewhat at length to deal with his position and with his contributions, both that we might give him due and proper recognition, and also that we thus might better be able to understand the more recent situation in Swedish theology.

LUTHER RESEARCH.

Following the example set by Billing and Söderblom Swedish theologians of the twentieth century have been ardent students of Luther and have published a number of important books in the field. When we say that these two men pioneered in this matter it does not mean that Luther had previously been unknown or ignored in Sweden. The movement started by Schartau in the southern part of that country appealed to Luther to substantiate its particular *modus vivendi*, theologically and ecclesiastically speaking. So did also the high-churchly group that existed at Lund about the middle of the 19th century. Pehr Eklund had published a Luther study in 1897 under the title *Den apostoliska tron i Martin Luthers katekesutläggning* (The Apostolic Faith in Luther's Explanation of the Catechism). It remained for the men of the 20th century, however, to enter more fully into this field and to make a real contribution to our understanding of Luther in all the variegated phases of his theology. It may be interesting to present a bird's-eye view of some of the more important authors and works that deal with the theology of Luther; this we shall endeavor to do in the following paragraphs.

GUSTAF AULEN.

In many respects Aulen follows the pattern set by his teachers Söderblom and Billing, and this is certainly the case with respect to his Luther studies. In a work published in 1912 he deals with Luther's idea of the Church and comes to the conclusion that, while Luther indeed had been influenced as to his idea of the Church by his polemic against the papacy, he nevertheless did not make any sharp distinction between the visible and the invisible Church, nor did he hold any spiritualistic concept of the Church. "Luther," says Aulen, "has created a principal unification in the concept of the Church, combining the ideal and the realistic. His view of the Church includes both its nature as an object of faith and its reality as the communion of saints."

The result of this investigation led Aulen also to other "findings" in the theology of Luther. In 1926 he was ready with a new Luther study: *Luthers gudsbild* (literally: Luther's Picture of God). In this he endeavors to establish what it is that for Luther constitutes the focal point in his concept of God; this he finds to be the revelation of God in Christ. He differentiates between the "general" knowledge of God, mediated by nature and by the Law; and the concept of Christian faith, which has its foundation in Christ. It is God who meets us in Christ; it is the God of omnipotence and judgment, but also the God of love, and the attributes of power and judgment are "remelted in the fire of love" (Op. cit., p. 197).

Aulen points out that when Luther uses the term *Deus absconditus* he is not merely laboring with expressions borrowed from Scholasticism. With Luther this idea stands as a bulwark against all rationalizing of faith. God is *absconditus* not only in judgment and condemnation, but also in love and salvation. Revelation itself is characterized by its unfathomable nature. "Luther sees *deus absconditus in revelatio*" (Op. Cit., p. 233).

The ideas of the Atonement, which constitutes so large and so vital a part of Aulen's theology, he has also found in Luther. Among these are a strong sense of dualism and the idea of Christ as our Liberator from the powers of evil, from sin, death, and the devil; the *Christus Victor*, who conquers all the enemies of man.

It would take us too far afield to try to follow Aulen in his presentation of Luther, but we must mention at least another very

important conclusion at which he arrived through his study of Luther. He has noted that present day Luther research should furnish us with a new approach and a new orientation with respect to our understanding of the history of Christian Doctrine. Luther, he affirms, has made clear that which is the very essence of Christianity, and from that point of view history of doctrine must be written. If that were done, the result would be quite different from that obtained when Harnack's premises constitute the foundation.

ARVID RUNESTAM.

Runestam has given us two fine introductions to the Swedish translations of Luther's works "The Bondage of the Will" and "Concerning the Liberty of a Christian." He has also a publication entitled *Den kristliga friheten hos Luther och Melancton* (Christian Liberty According to Luther and Melancton), 1917. In another he investigates Luther's inner development. He has also investigated the ethical concepts of Luther and published some of his findings in this respect in his work *Kärlek, tro, efterföljd*, 1931 (Love, Faith, and Imitation). In addition to these, Runestam has written a number of more popular studies dealing with Luther as a reformer.

Concerning the two men we have mentioned thus far it may be said that Aulen seeks to set forth the theology of Luther as seen from its own religio-ethical coherence. Runestam, on the other hand, has sought to understand Luther from the psychological point of view. Thus Aulen and Runestam stand as exponents of two different lines of Luther research that are to be found among the theologians of present-day Sweden.

Other Writers.

An examination of Swedish book lists will at once establish the fact that Swedish scholars have been very productive in the line of Luther research. Time and space do not permit us more fully to describe these publications, but a mere mention of the subjects treated will help us to understand and appreciate the wide variety of sub-topics that have been covered in this production.

Anders Nygren has dealt with the subject in several of his volumes, as for instance in his *Urkristendomen och reformationen*, 1932 (Ancient Christianity and the Reformation); *Filosofisk och*

kristen etik (Philosophical and Christian Ethics); and *Religiositet och kristendom* (Religiosity and Christianity). These, together with a number of articles that have appeared in various journals, attest to the fact that Professor Nygren has been and still is a devoted student of Luther. In his monumental work *Eros and Agape* he deals at length with Luther and indicates that the Agape concept is fundamental in the theology of Luther, and that this constituted the fact that enabled him to become the great reformer.

Torsten Bohlin has written concerning *Gudstro och Kristustro hos Luther*, 1927 (Faith in God and Faith in Christ According to Luther). His *Tro och uppenbarelse*, 1926 (Faith and Revelation) is also a Luther study.

Bishop Gustaf Ljunggren has produced a very important work entitled *Synd och skuld i Luthers teologi*, 1928 (Sin and Guilt in the Theology of Luther). This book, by the way, has received recognition among the theologians of Germany as a work of unusual merit and as setting forth the central idea in the theology of Luther.

Ragnar Bring has published *Dualismen hos Luther*, 1929, and *Förhållandet mellan tro och gärningar inom luthersk teologi*, 1933 (The Relationship between Faith and Works in Lutheran Theology), also a number of articles, especially in *Svensk teologisk kvartalsskrift*, dealing with some phase of Luther research.

Other and younger men are also adhering to this tradition of Luther research and are publishing works on the subject.

Recent Swedish translations of works by Luther have also appeared. Among these may be mentioned the following: The Schmalkald Articles, The Bondage of the Will, Concerning the Liberty of a Christian, The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, The Large Catechism, and the Large Commentary on Galatians.

In view of what we have said above, we can now add that one of the most important contributions that Swedish scholars have made within the field of theology has been made in the realm of Luther research. This is of importance in and by itself, but it obtains its chief significance from the fact that these studies also constitute the underlying foundation on which a distinctive Swedish theology has been built.

(PART THREE: LUNDENSIAN THEOLOGY, will be published in the August issue of the Journal of Theology.)

The Old Mother Church and

H

By Professor
Luther Theologian

EDITOR'S NOTE: This written as a JOURNAL contribution to a general discussion planned for a Convocation held last January in Minneapolis. We had hoped to publish it on the same topic and on the same topic as we presented it. However, we deem it of value as a thought-provoking introduction to a subject of the Home Mission problem that justice to the writer it should be as a thesis treating the subject's most noteworthy feature of raising questions touching on the sequence of the sequence.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS ARTICLE

is not to give another paper, or to deliver a lecture, but to lead a discussion. In order to help stimulate discussion and to give some direction to it, let me try, first, to state the topic by sketching the situation to be considered; secondly, to suggest by means of three or four questions as many aspects of the problem involved in the situation; thirdly, to analyze each of these phases of the problem briefly in turn, and then to throw it open for general discussion; fourthly, to sum up, if possible, a few worthwhile conclusions from the whole discussion.

THE SITUATION

that we are to consider is that of Home Missions in terms of an old, established city church.

1. A city church, rather than a rural church (whose problems may be similar, yet different); though including cities of quite moderate size.

2. An old, established church; inclined sometimes to be rather